



City of Seattle 2004 Families & Education Levy Levy Funding Case Statement



PURPOSE

A rationale and recommended package for a comprehensive, targeted and integrated 2004 Levy proposal. The CAC's proposal ties together a set of prioritized Action Strategies, Major Initiatives and Levy size recommendations into an integrated package to promote a systemic approach to addressing the needs of Seattle's youth and families.

CASE STATEMENT

1. The CAC's Recommended Approach is Needs-Based

- Significant needs are identified in the CAC's *Understanding the Needs* document
- As a fundamental principle, and in implementing the CAC's prioritized Action Strategies, the Committee recommends that the City focus Levy resources where they are most needed

2. The CAC Has Prioritized a Set of Action Strategies for the 2004 Levy

- The Committee has prioritized Action Strategies in each of the five Investment Areas -- Early Learning, Support for Middle and High School Students, Out-of-School Time, Health and Family Involvement -- within the Levy Policy Framework developed by the Levy Oversight Committee
- The CAC prioritized the Action Strategies based on their professional expertise, community experience and experience as practitioners; as well as consideration of community input and best practices in the field
- Some Action Strategies will be implemented on a Citywide basis
- The Action Strategies are presented as individual strategies, although they will be best implemented using a systemic, integrated approach
- Most priority Action Strategies will be implemented as part of the Major Initiatives (they are building blocks for the Initiatives)
- However, the Major Initiatives are not the only way that the Action Strategies will be implemented
- While the CAC did not propose a Major Initiative specifically for High School Aged Youth, the CAC believes that the Action Strategies recommended for these youth should be a high priority
- The Levy package must have enough flexibility to continue programs that have demonstrated success, and that have the potential to meet the goals and outcomes delineated in the Levy Policy Framework
- Additional staff work is required to develop and cost the prioritized Action Strategies, and to integrate them with current practices

3. The CAC Has Designed Three Major Initiatives to Move To an Integrated, Targeted, Systemic Approach to Implementing Many of the Action Strategies

- The three Major Initiatives are: Early Learning; Community Partnerships for Student Success (CPSS); and Comprehensive Health Services
- The three Major Initiatives have been developed to address and integrate the needs across services; the Initiatives are big, integrative concepts – “Big Ideas to Address Big Needs”
- The Initiatives have been designed to build on what has been successful
- There is flexibility in how the Initiatives can be phased and implemented
- The Major Initiatives must be implemented so as to make a measurable improvement in outcomes
- Implementation of the Initiatives will require change in how business is done currently

4. The CAC Considered Many Factors in Developing a Recommended Levy Funding Range, Including:

- Citywide need and demographic, socio-economic characteristics within the City
- The need to be responsive to the three Levy goals for Seattle’s children to be healthy, school ready and to achieve academically
- The current Levy amount and changes in inflation since 1997
- The cost of implementing the Major Initiatives at an effective and likely-to-be-successful scale
- A review of the principles and methods the City has used for other levies
- Other initiatives being put before Seattle’s voters
- Feasibility considerations, including the need for a solid rationale for Levy recommendations, and for those recommendations to be credible to the City and the community

5. The CAC Recommends that the 2004 Levy Be Funded at \$106-114 million

- The CAC’s integrated, targeted package of recommendations will make a difference in the lives of Seattle’s needy children, and sufficient funding is necessary to effectively implement the recommended package
- The needs of Seattle’s children and families are so significant that this funding level, by itself, is unlikely to be sufficient to:
 - - Fully meet the Levy’s goals and
 - - Allow for complete funding of the integrated, systemic Major Initiatives as well as of the priority Action Strategies

6. The CAC Recommends that the City Use the CAC’s Policy Recommendations to Inform Funding and Implementation of the Children and Youth Strategy

7. Program Evaluation is a Critical Component of Implementation

- Because the Levy must provide for a measurable improvement in outcomes, funding for the Levy should include strategy-based evaluations, which focus on the outcome of the overall package of strategies, as a whole
- To measure effectiveness of the Levy investment, 5% of total Levy funding should be set aside for comprehensive outcome-based evaluation and accountability measures
- To most effectively and efficiently use Levy, agency and program resources, a comprehensive outcome-based evaluation should be conducted at two points in the Levy cycle – mid-Levy (or three years into the Levy cycle) and six years into the Levy cycle.
- The mid-cycle evaluation will allow for strategy improvement and refinement (or course correction) to create the most effective strategies. A committee of community and agency representatives should advise the independent evaluator on appropriate outcome definitions and measures, and review draft findings and recommendations. The independent evaluator will report to City staff, the LOC or an advisory group responsible for overseeing evaluation. This feedback, when finalized, will be distributed to the community.
- The final evaluation will measure cumulative outcomes at the macro level against Levy goals and strategic investment areas.
- Administrative accountability measures should be documented on an annual basis by all Levy funding recipients.
- Annual “Reports to the Community” should be provided summarizing program activities, outcomes, and evaluation findings.

8. Technical Assistance is a Valuable Tool for Strengthening Strategy Development.

- To be most effective in meeting Levy goals, technical assistance should be provided to potential service providers prior to any RFP process, during strategy implementation and the evaluation phase
- Technical assistance should also be available for implementation and evaluation